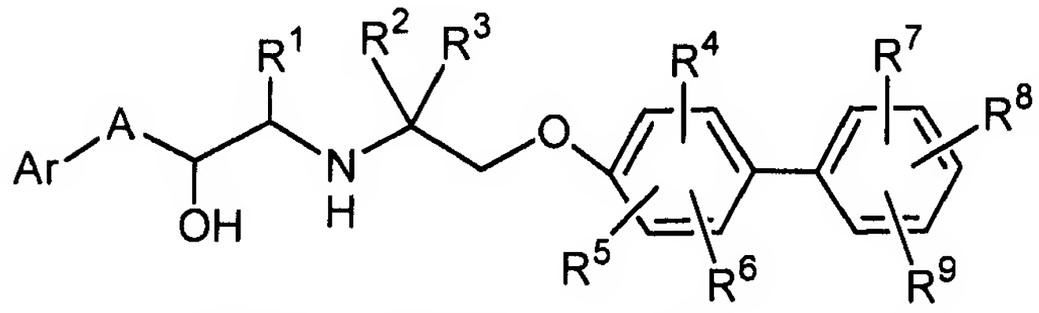
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A compound represented by general formula (I):



(I)

a prodrug thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a cycloalkyl group, a heterocycloalkyl group, an aryl group, an aryloxy group, an aralkyloxy group, a heteroaryl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a cyclic amino group, a di(lower alkyl)amino-lower alkyl group, a lower acyl group, a lower alkylsulfanyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a carboxy group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group or an aralkyloxycarbonyl group,

or R^7 and R^8 are bonded together to form $-OCH_2O-$ or $-CH=CH-CH=CH-$;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

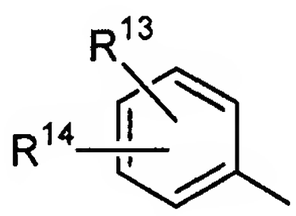
R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$,

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A^2 is a lower alkylene group;

Ar is a group represented by a formula:



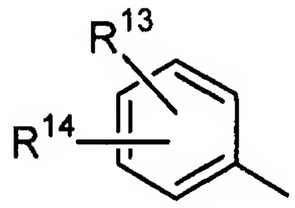
, or a heteroaryl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by –NH-C(O)-NH-, provided that when one of R^{13} and R^{14} is a hydrogen atom, then the other is not a hydroxy group; and

A is a bond, $-OCH_2-$ or $-SCH_2-$.

2. (original): The compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

Ar is a group represented by a formula:

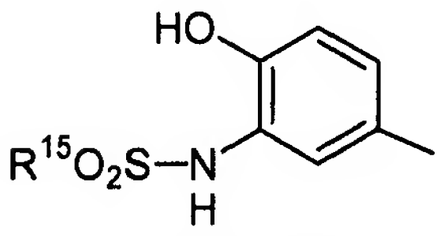


, or a pyridyl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by –NH-C(O)-NH-.

3. (original): The compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

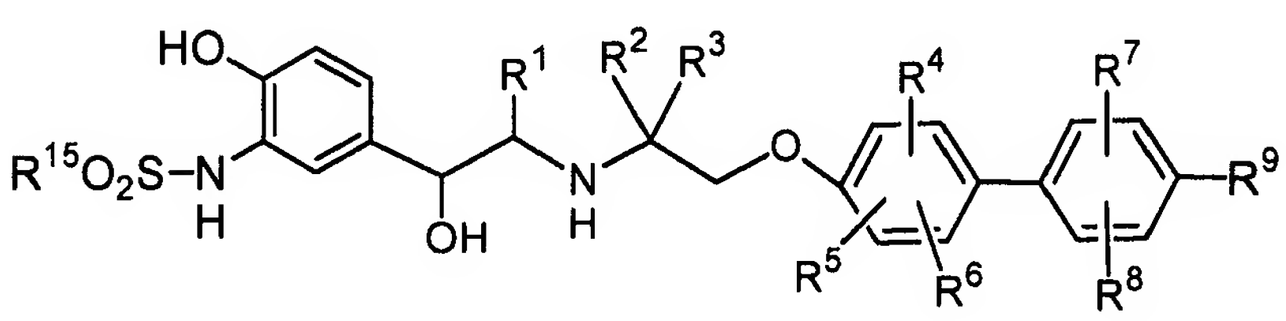
Ar is a group represented by a formula:



, in which R^{15} is a lower alkyl group; and

A is a bond.

4. (original): A compound represented by general formula (II):



(II)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a carboxy group, or a lower alkoxycarbonyl group;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$;

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A^2 is a lower alkylene group; and

R^{15} is a lower alkyl group.

5. (original): The compound according to claim 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^9 is $-COR^{10}$, or $-OCH_2COR^{10}$; and

R^{10} is a hydroxy group or a lower alkoxy group.

6. (original): The compound according to claim 5, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein at least one of R^2 and R^3 is a hydrogen atom.

7. (original): The compound according to claim 5, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein R^2 and R^3 are a hydrogen atom.

8. (original): The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

each of R^4 and R^5 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group; and R^6 is a lower alkyl group.

9. (original): The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^4 is a hydrogen atom; and

each of R^5 and R^6 is independently a lower alkyl group.

10. (original): The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^4, R^5 and R^6 are a hydrogen atom; and

R^8 is a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, or a di(lower alkyl)amino group.

11. (original): The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^4, R^5 and R^6 are a hydrogen atom; and

R^8 is a lower alkyl group.

12. (original): The compound according to claim 1, a lower alkyl ester thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, selected from the group consisting of

4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-3',5'-di-methylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}-2',6'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

(4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-3',5'-di-methylbiphenyl-4-yloxy)acetic acid;

4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-2',6'-di-methylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

(4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-2',6'-di-methylbiphenyl-4-yloxy)acetic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}-2-methylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-3,4-dicarboxylic acid;

3-(N,N-dimethylamino)-4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonylaminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}-biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

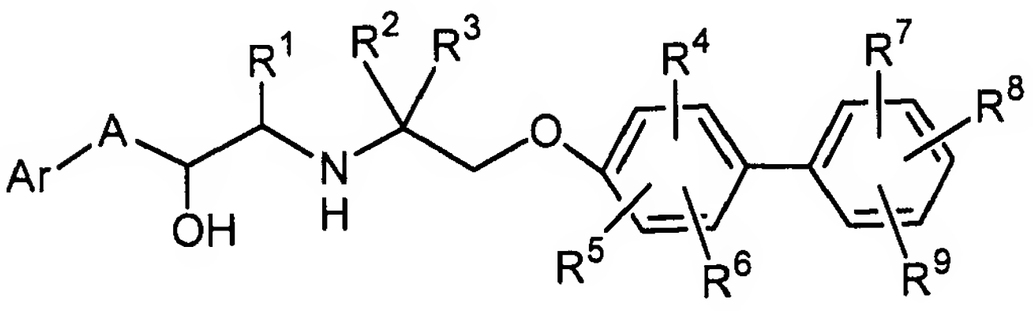
3-ethoxy-4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-3-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-4-yloxy)propylamino]ethoxy}-3',5'-dimethyl-biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid; and

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-3-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-4-yloxy)propylamino]ethoxy}-3-isopropyl-3',5'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid.

13. (currently amended): A pharmaceutical composition which comprises, as an active ingredient, a compound ~~according to claim 1~~of general formula (I):



(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a cycloalkyl group, a heterocycloalkyl group, an aryl group, an aryloxy group, an aralkyloxy

group, a heteroaryl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a cyclic amino group, a di(lower alkyl)amino-lower alkyl group, a lower acyl group, a lower alkylsulfanyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a carboxy group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group or an aralkyloxycarbonyl group,

or R^7 and R^8 are bonded together to form $-OCH_2O-$ or $-CH=CH-CH=CH-$;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

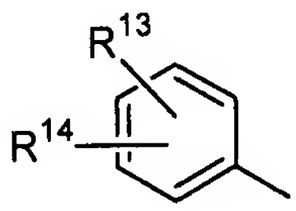
R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$,

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A^2 is a lower alkylene group;

Ar is a group represented by a formula:



, or a heteroaryl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by $-NH-C(O)-NH-$,

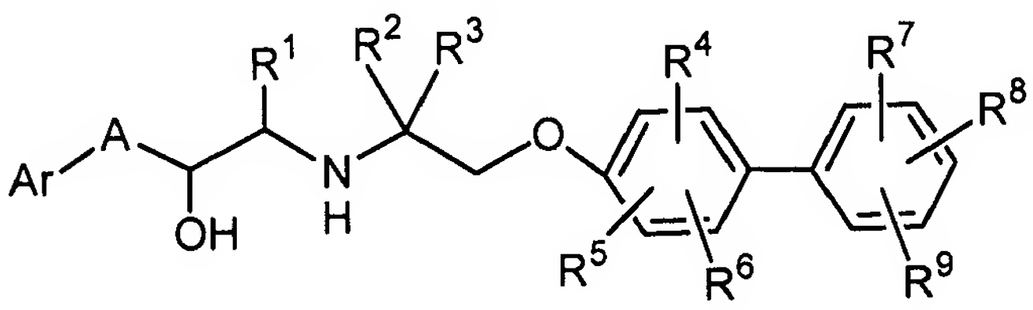
provided that when one of R^{13} and R^{14} is a hydrogen atom, then the other is not a hydroxy group;

and

A is a bond, $-OCH_2-$ or $-SCH_2-$, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier~~or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof~~.

Claim 14 (canceled).

15. (currently amended): A pharmaceutical combination comprising (A) a compound ~~according to claim 1~~of general formula (I):



(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a cycloalkyl group, a heterocycloalkyl group, an aryl group, an aryloxy group, an aralkyloxy

group, a heteroaryl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a cyclic amino group, a di(lower alkyl)amino-lower alkyl group, a lower acyl group, a lower alkylsulfanyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a carboxy group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group or an aralkyloxycarbonyl group,

or R^7 and R^8 are bonded together to form $-OCH_2O-$ or $-CH=CH-CH=CH-$;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

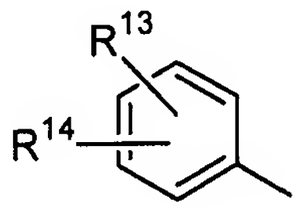
R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$,

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A2 is a lower alkylene group;

Ar is a group represented by a formula:



, or a heteroaryl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by $-NH-C(O)-NH-$,

provided that when one of R^{13} and R^{14} is a hydrogen atom, then the other is not a hydroxy group;

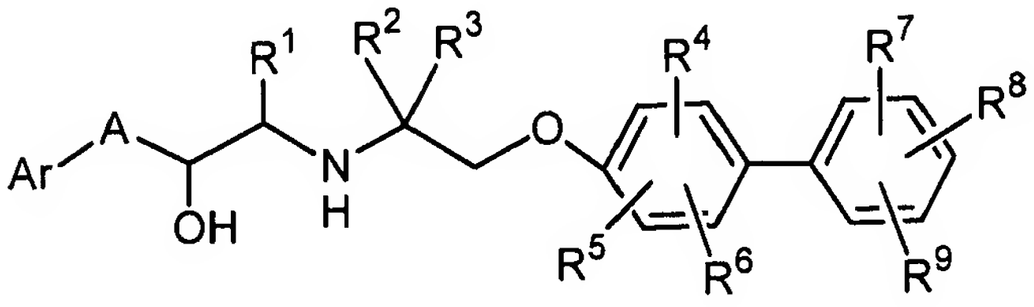
and

A is a bond, $-OCH_2-$ or $-SCH_2-$, ~~according to claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof~~ and

(B) at least one member selected from the group consisting of an antiobesity agent, an antidiabetic agent, a hypolipidemic agent and a therapeutic agent for urinary dysfunctions other than a β3-adrenoceptor agonist.

Claim 16 (canceled).

17. (currently amended): A method for treating ~~or preventing~~ obesity, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, depression, urinary dysfunctions, diseases caused by biliary calculus or biliary tract hypermotility, or diseases caused by intestinal hypermotility, which comprises administering an effective amount of a compound ~~according to claim 1~~ of general formula (I):



(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a cycloalkyl group, a heterocycloalkyl group, an aryl group, an aryloxy group, an aralkyloxy group, a heteroaryl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a cyclic amino group, a di(lower alkyl)amino-lower alkyl group, a lower acyl group, a lower alkylsulfanyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a carboxy group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group or an aralkyloxycarbonyl group,

or R^7 and R^8 are bonded together to form $-OCH_2O-$ or $-CH=CH-CH=CH-$;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

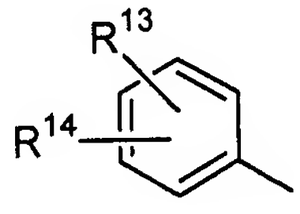
R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$,

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A^2 is a lower alkylene group;

Ar is a group represented by a formula:



, or a heteroaryl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by –NH-C(O)-NH-, provided that when one of R^{13} and R^{14} is a hydrogen atom, then the other is not a hydroxy group; and

A is a bond, $-OCH_2-$ or $-SCH_2-$ ~~or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof~~.